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## Make plans to attend TML Annual Conference in Memphis, June 22-25

When companies seek out new communities in which to expand or relocate facilities, a range of both qualitative and quantitative factors are part of their site selection deci-

Mark Arend, editor in chief of Site Selection magazine, will discuss how the nation's leading site selectors evaluate potential locations and what it takes to land a project during the TML Annual Conference in Memphis, slated for June 22-25.

Arend's session will be held on Monday morning, June 24, and will help city leaders better understand the competitive environment for their sites and be able to identify targets for improvement. He will discuss:

- location criteria most important to site selectors;
- advantages of rural locations over urban ares;
- workforce certificates and other credentials important to site locaters;
- how to get noticed in the crowd of location options; and
- tips for effective economic development websites

Also scheduled is a keynote presentation on Sunday, June 23, on crisis leadership and real lessons in decision making.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Lt Col. Robert Darling was working in the White House Military Office and was recruited to provide his military



Mark Arend Site Selection Magazine

expertise. He witnessed firsthand the enormity of the crisis and the leadership decisions that were made that day on behalf of all Americans.

The four-day conference will feature many top-notch speakers and workshop sessions, several special events, and ample time to network with your peers.

Other highlights include a panel presentation on Neighborhood Revitalization and Blight Removal; and a panel presentation on Open Records, Body Cameras, and Issues with Emerging Technol-

As part of the many conference offerings, several workshops sessions will be offered that meet the continuing education requirement for CMFOs and utility board members. Workshops will be held See CONFERENCE on Page 4

## **Northeast Tennessee District Attorneys** General lawsuit against opioid makers moves forward after new judge's ruling

BY KATE COIL TML Communications Specialist

A lawsuit filed by district

attorneys general in Northeast Tennessee is moving forward in its aim to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable for practices that contributed to the opioid abuse epidemic faced by the region and the state at large. Sullivan County Chancery

Court Judge E.G. Moody ruled that the plaintiffs in the case have the right to sue drug companies including Purdue Pharmaceuticals, Mallinckrodt and Endo Pharmaceuticals. Second Judicial District Attorney General Barry Staubus, First Judicial District Attorney General Tony Clark, and Third Judicial District Attorney General Dan Armstrong are bringing the suit for both their individual districts and on behalf of Baby Doe, an unnamed child born with neonatal abstinence syndrome who lives in the region. The suit was initially filed in 2017.

According to the suit, the pharmaceutical companies "mislead doctors and the public about the need for, and addictive nature of opioid drugs" and "spent years engaged in a fraudulent scheme to push their wares into a market of unsuspecting doctors and patients." It also alleges that when the opioid epidemic became prevalent, the manufacturers "turned



Nurses in the neonatal intensive care unit at Niswonger Children's Hospital in Johnson City comfort an infant born with neonatal abstinence syndrome, or NAS. Born dependent on opiates, the month-old boy and thousands like him are the smallest victims of the opioid epidemic. Wracked by the opioid crisis, Northeastern Tennessee has one of the highest rates of NAS, and the hospital recently built a new ward to care for the increasing number of children born dependent on opiates.

a blind eye to the problems and collection of millions of dollars in ill-gotten profits."

Second Judicial District Attorney General Barry Staubus said the suit was brought under the Tennessee Drug Dealers Liability Act, which was passed in 2010 to allow anyone "who knowingly participates in the illegal drug market" liable for civil damages caused by

their involvement.

"It re-establishes that the district attorneys have the authority to bring this lawsuit under the Drug Dealers Liability Act," he said. "It is also important that the plaintiff in this case is Baby Doe. The order from the court establishing that we have the authority to bring the lawsuit also established a protocol See OPIOIDS on Page 3

## Knoxville program brings together youth, police officers to cultivate understanding

BY KATE COIL

The last Saturday in March, young men and law enforcement officials met at Knoxville's Phyllis Wheatley YWCA for a workshop focused on discussion and understanding between police and area

The second annual Save Our Sons Positive Engagement with Law Enforcement Workshop brought out Knoxville Police Chief Eve Thomas, Knoxville Police Advisory Review Committee Executive Director Clarence Vaughn, Assistant District Attorney Takisha Fitzgerald, and officers with both the Knoxville Police Department and Knox County Sheriff's Office to dialogue with young men between the ages of 14 and 24 from the community.

Tatia Harris, grant manager and Title VI coordinator with the program, said the idea for the workshop came out of the positive interaction that began at another Save Our Sons event last year.



Participants in the Save Our Sons Positve Engagement with Law Enforcement workshop learn about community policing from Knoxville police officers. The program works to build understanding between young men and law enforcement.

"We had our first Positive Engagement with Law Enforcement workshop last year in March," Harris said. "That came from several things. We funded some pilot programs that met with our mission and vision, and one of them was called Safe Haven gym. This allowed young men to play basketball at a center after hours. In addition to basketball, they were given a meal and some life skills workshops. The local police were invited to come and interact, to play basketball with the young men and referee. Sometimes they taught the life skills courses."

The experience allowed both the officers and youth participants to see each other in a new light.

"Near the end of the program, the officers brought their families one of the nights," Harris said. "The results of that showed that the young men felt they were safe and were able to look at the officers as regular people. Then when they encountered each other in other situations, those occurrences were more positive."

Established by Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero in 2014, the Save our Sons program was created to combat community violence and the high rate of deaths of young black men by addressing underlying issues such as multi-generational poverty and providing clearer paths to educational and work opportunities. The program also brings the Knoxville Police Department, juvenile court, and

public defenders in to both help deter youth from crime as well as help those who have been incarcerated integrate back into the community and society in positive ways.

Harris said the program mainly targets young African-American men between the ages of 14 and 24 but will also allow younger and older participants and non-African-American youth to participate.

"We did some studies when Save our Sons was created," Harris said. "Studies and statistics show that one of the most vulnerable groups is black males between the ages of 14 and 24. We ran some reports and found that what we were seeing in Knoxville was in line with that. In our city, 85 percent of violent crime occurring in specific areas either had a black male within that age group as the perpetrator or the victim."

During the positive engagement workshop, the participants trade places with officers to do mock stops and simulated shooting exercises. The local district attorney's office also gave a presentation to the group. Officers and area youth shared a meal together and had an open dialogue about their perspectives.

"The feedback from the young men was that they now know where the officers are coming from and what they go through," Harris said. "The officers said they understood what these young men are feeling and gave them a different perspec-See YOUTH on Page 4

#### \$40 million school safety proposal Tennessee lawmakers have ables schools that currently have passed one of Gov. Bill Lee's inian SRO to pursue grants to fund

TN Legislature passes Gov. Lee's

tiatives – \$40 million in funding to be used to improve school safety.

The funding will be distributed as safety grants to help pay for school resource officers and other priorities. Schools are to provide matching funds in order to receive the grants.

According to a press release distributed by the governor's staff, approximately 500 Tennessee schools do not currently have SROs. Changes to the law will enable them to fill these positions. The proposal also accommodates underserved counties working to secure schools and fill SRO positions by adjusting limited match requirements to be proportional to districts' fiscal capacity.

other safety priorities such as implementing building security measures or developing innovative violence prevention programs.

"While we are providing resources for additional security measures for our schools, districts need to also consider programming that identifies students who are in need of intervention," said Lee. "Security is paramount, but we must also double down on efforts to identify harmful situations before they arise."

The Department of Safety and Homeland Security and the Department of Education will jointly oversee programming and grant

funds while also providing threat assessment tools The new funding plan also en-

## Tennessee's overall fire death rate follows national downward trend

SFMO report celebrates lives saved, new training space to better prepare firefighters

Tennessee's overall fire death rate continues to decline following the national downward trend in the reduction of fire deaths, according to statistics compiled in the recently completed annual report for the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO).

The report, which includes details of Tennessee's overall declining fire death rate along with statewide fire prevention and education efforts, compiles data provided by fire departments from across the Volunteer State along with information, statistics, and advancements made by the SFMO's eight sections: education and outreach; fire investigations; codes enforcement; residential, electrical, and marina inspections; manufactured housing and modular buildings; fire service and codes enforcement academy; firefighting commission; and administrative services.

Tennessee, which has historically ranked among the highest states with civilian fire deaths, is now



Recruits participate in a simulated fire rescue training class at the Tennessee Fire and Codes Academy in Bell Buckle.

ranked No. 11 in the nation for fire deaths by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) with 14.6 deaths per million from 2011 - 2015. This compares to its ranking as No. 6 in the nation from 2006 - 2010.

See FIRE on Page 3

### **NEWS ACROSS TENNESSEE**



#### **BARTLETT**

LSI Graphics has kicked off celebrations for its 45th year in business by cutting the ribbon on a new 12,000-square-foot expansion to its Bartlett facility. The company's growth, including the addition of 20 jobs in the past year, prompted the expansion. The company supports both national and local custom sign installation, maintenance, and printing projects. Signage created by the company has been displayed at events like Super Bowl LIII and at the Memphis Grizzlies Stadium, the Bass Pro Shops Pyramid, and at numerous local businesses.

#### **BRENTWOOD**

The city of Brentwood has outlined a \$154 million budget for capital projects in the next six years. Transportation projects make up the bulk of the city's capital project plan at \$67 million, including \$18 million for the continued widening project on Franklin Road, more than \$9.8 million to cover the proposed extension of McEwen Drive, nearly \$12 million to widen Ragsdale Road, and \$15 million for street resurfacing. Plans also call for \$28 million for a new police headquarters, including a \$1.25 million share from Williamson County to help fund the emergency communications component of the new facility. The city has also budgeted \$4.5 million for improvements to existing fire stations as well as the site acquisition of a future fifth fire station and \$3.6 million for a new facility to house all parks department staff.

#### **CHATTANOOGA**

Chattanooga will become the first city in Tennessee to take part in Domino's Pizza's Paving for Potholes program. The city accepted a \$5,000 donation from the restaurant chain to fill between 750 and 900 potholes across the city. Public works officials said the grant would fund somewhere between 25 and 30 days' worth of work filling potholes based on the average number of potholes a single truck is able to patch daily. As part of the contract, the city must film or photograph at least two potholes and provide those images to Domino's to advertise the program. The restaurant launched the campaign last year as a way of protecting pizzas from being damaged in transit, which had been a customer complaint. The company asked customers to submit their local potholes or ZIP codes. The response prompted the company to promise to pave at least one community in every state in 2019.

#### **CLARKSVILLE**

The Clarksville Greenway will expand thanks to a 15.86 acre donation from the Aspire Foundation, a local community and business development nonprofit. The land will carry the greenway under 101st Airborne Division Parkway along Big West Fork Creek, also known as the West Fork of the Red River. The city will be able to extend another leg of the greenway north from the Pollard Road Trailhead along the creek. The Clarksville Greenway began as a rails-to-trails project and presently is 9.3 miles long with access for pedestrians, cyclists, skaters, and dog walkers.

#### **CLEVELAND**

The city of Cleveland has launched

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a re-engineering initiative to bring city operations up to speed. Part of the project is also updating the city's computing system to offer faster customer service and communication, which will eliminate paperwork and increase productivity with real-time services. The system will also allow more online services such as permit purchases, paying property taxes, or park pavilion rentals. The new system will also be used to make things easier for city employees in their day-to-day tasks. In addition, the city is reorganizing some departments as part of the project. The city's department of development and engineering services will create employee teams dealing with transportation, community development, stormwater, and buildings. A new engineer and transportation planner will be added to the staff. The city's forestry division will also be broken out of the city's parks and recreation department, allowing forestry staff to focus on mowing, landscaping, and other services while the parks department will be able to focus more on recreational programming and park enhancement.

#### **GREENEVILLE**

The city of Greenville will officially dedicate a new fire training facility that will be open to local, state, regional, and federal fire and law enforcement officials. The Greenville Fire Training Facility is a multi-level facility featuring residential, commercial, and industrial props designed for training use by firefighters, law enforcement, rescue workers, and other emergency personnel. One of the most prominent features of the facility is the four-story Drill Tower. Live fire simulators and other props provide training on vehicle fires, propane fires and leaks, dumpster fires, and high-angle rescue. The facility can also accommodate fire engines, aerial apparatus, hose line deployment, ladder raises, and vehicle extrication equipment for training purposes. Several local companies will also use the facility for workplace safety training. Officials with the Greeneville Fire Department toured multiple sites to conduct research for what would be needed to develop the facility, which will be used by numerous local agencies.

#### **KINGSPORT**

Anita's Snack Foods has broken ground on a 40,000-square-foot expansion to its Kingsport facility, which will add up to 30 new jobs. The facility was taken over by Anita's from Pure Foods in 2018 and has since added production staff with a total of around 90 employees. By the time this new expansion is complete, Anita's officials say the company should employ around 120. Anita's produces snacks for both retailers and private label sellers. In recent years, the company has expanded its lines from its base tortilla products to include corn chips, pellet snacks and extruded snacks. Extruded snacks include puffs and onion rings. Pellet snacks are made from multigrain bases, as well as potato, corn, and other vegetables to create shaped products including squares, straws, sticks, rings, ripples, and twists. The company also makes a variety of taco shells.

#### **NASHVILLE**

Nashville Mayor David Briley has unveiled a new \$750 million affordable housing initiative for the city. Under One Roof 2029 includes \$500 million from the city budget itself and will create 10,000 units of affordable housing in the city in 10 years. It will accelerate development of the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency's mixed-income Envision communities, increase the city's investment in the Barnes Fund for grants to nonprofit housing developers by 50 percent over 10 years, challenge the private sector to contribute \$250 million to affordable housing, and build 100 units of permanent supportive housing and connected service center to deal with chronic homelessness.

#### **OAK RIDGE**

A first-of-its-kind medical isotope production facility will be built on 206 acres of land previously held by the Department of Energy, creating more than 200 high-paying permanent jobs in Oak Ridge. The Department of Energy property previously housed a uranium production plant and portions of the old K-25 Gaseous Diffusion Plant's powerhouse and was transferred by the DOE to Coquí Radio Pharmaceuticals Corp., which produces medical isotopes. The company plans to build a \$500 million production facility in the "Duct Island" section of the East Tennessee Technology Park. Radioactive isotopes can provide diagnostic information on patient conditions or be used to treat medical conditions like cancer, because they can destroy targeted cells. Coquí's facility will be the first isotope production facility of its kind, focusing primarily on the production of molybdenum-99 isotopes, also known as Mo-99, which is used in more than 18 million medical procedures each year in the U.S. that aid in the diagnosis and treatment of brain, heart, lung, liver, renal, oncologic and muscle skeletal diseases.

#### UNICOI

The Unicoi Board of Mayor and Aldermen has committed two tracts of property near the town's tourist information and visitor's center to a state food growing initiative that will improve local access and consumption of healthy foods. The "food forest" project will be located near the commercial food preparation and education facility created by the town known as the Mountain Harvest Kitchen. The second tract of land will include six raised garden beds cultivated as part of local community organizations and the kitchen. The town will not have to make any financial investments into the state project but has committed land to the project for up to 10 years.

#### **UNION CITY**

A new hemp facility at Union City's Northwest Tennessee Industrial park is pledging to create hundreds of jobs. The city council recently approved the sale of approximately 375 acres of land at the industrial park for \$3.75 million. The company plans to create a 1-million-square-foot processing facility, two greenhouses that take up 60 acres, two rail spurs, and the company's corporate headquarters on the site. The hemp facility is expected to fill 120 to 150 full-time positions, including scientists and agronomists. In addition, the company will hire about 800 workers every May and June to work the fields. Sparks said the company is in the process of contracting 10,000 acres of farmland. Officials said the facility will produce hemp fibers for clothing and other uses as well as a research and development facility for the creation of future products.

## **Etowah dedicates historic** marker for Carneige library



The city of Etowah recently held a dedication ceremony for a new historical sign honoring the Etowah Carnegie Library on the National Register of Historic Places. Funded through an \$8,000 grant from industrialist Andrew Carnegie, the library was erected in the community in 1915 and added to the national register in 2003. It is one of only four still operational Carnegie libraries in the state of

## **Athens Regional Park** reopens after renovations



The Athens Regional Park playground has reopened for public use after an eight-month renovation. The new features at the playground include a rubber safety surface, equipment relocations and renovations, and the addition of a splash pad. Further renovations are still planned for the park including colored picnic tables and shade structures. The shelters are planned to be 40-by-20 feet to accommodate up to 50 people for an event.

## Pleasant Hill breaks ground on new town veterans park



Former Pleasant Hill Mayor Al Dwenger and Councilmembers Linda Smith, Don Dowdey and Franklin Cobos break ground on the town's Beecher Seegraves Veterans Park. The park is named for local World War II veteran Beecher Seegraves, who was also present at the groundbreaking ceremony. The memorial plaques, landscaping, and land for the project were all donated. Current Pleasant Hill Mayor Lisa Patrick and former town mayors Ginny Nixon, Jim Olds, and Diane Savage also took part in the event.

## **Data Security Analysis For Cities & Towns**

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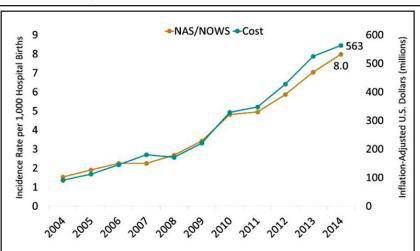
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Tennessee has seen a steady rise in the number of infants born with neo-natal abstinence syndrome (NAS) as well as a correlated cost in the rise in cost for caring for these children. The major plantiff in the suit filed by the three Northeast Tennessee district attorneys general is Baby Doe, one such child born addicted to opioids who Second Judicial District Attorney General Barry Staubus says represents all of the children in the region born with NAS.

# Lawsuit against opioid makers moves forward after new judge's ruling

**OPIOIDS,** from Page 1

for discovery and for regulating it, which we hope will get us closer to trial. By making these rulings, it's expedited the time in which we can get to trial."

The case has been filed in state court and Staubus said the aim is to get it before a jury of Sullivan County citizens. Now, Staubus said, he and the other district attorneys general can focus on the discovery phase of the suit and preparation for trial.

Staubus became involved in the suit specifically because of the severity of the problem with opioids he saw in his local area.

"We were seeing a tremendous amount of people become addicted to the drug, which has led to overdose deaths, drug addition, criminal behavior, and drug-addicted babies," he said. "We could see the cost in real human terms but also in financial terms such as raising and educating children born drug addicted, rehabilitating those people on drugs, and trying to prosecute the people who are bringing those drugs into the area. As I looked out across my county, I could see it impacted poor, rich, young, old, male, female. It was tearing into the fabric of our county, and I felt we should hold those folks who made these drugs overly available for abuse respon-

In 2017 alone, some 1,776 Tennesseans died from drug overdoses – marking another year of record drug overdose deaths in the state. Prescription drugs still remain the most common type of drug involved in overdose deaths. In that same time frame, medical providers in the state wrote 94.4 opioid prescriptions per every 100 persons in the state, the third highest rate in the country and 1.5 times higher than the U.S. average. Despite this high number, the state's opioid prescription rate has been on the decline since 2013.

Kingsport Police Chief David Quillin knows these statistics all too well. A 34-year veteran of law enforcement, Quillin worked undercover in vice units in the late 1980s and early 1990s, supervising the local drug unit in the mid-1990s.

When he began working in law enforcement, Quillin said it was mostly marijuana and cocaine that made up the majority of drug-related problems, but for the past decade, opioids became the area's main drug issue.

"Opioids are related to the majority of the calls for service we receive either directly or indirectly, whether it's a theft or robbery or an assault," he said. "This problem didn't develop overnight, and I don't think anyone wakes up and says 'Today's the day I become addicted to opioids.' So many people who become addicted are average citizens. We've seen soccer moms, police officers, professionals in the community, or someone who's had a legitimate surgery and through their prescription becomes addicted. It tears families apart and is just sad to watch."

Quillin said for him and his officers, the hardest cases are the ones that involve children who have become victims of the opioid abuse around them.

"You go to the hospital and you see the infants that are crying because they were born into this world addicted," he said. "All of us that wear a uniform are kind of thick skin because we see so many different things. But when you deal with a situation where a child is involved it takes such a mental toll. It just drains you when you have to deal with it."



Second Judicial District Attorney General Barry Staubus

To combat the epidemic, the Kingsport Police Department has a drug take-back drop box for anyone who wants to drop off their unused prescriptions no questions asked to be disposed of properly. Quillin said the department has taken literal tons of medicine off the street as the result of both this takeback box and takeback events.

The department also has to dedicate important resources to fighting the epidemic.

"One of my biggest headaches is a certain neighborhood in town that takes up a tremendous amount of resources because of opioids," Quillin said. "We've had to reassign manpower to create more of a police presence in those trouble spots and really concentrate on interaction with people in that area. I grew up in this neighborhood that I'm talking about, and there are decent, hard-working people that live there."

Unfortunately, Kingsport is not the only community facing this issue.

"This isn't unique to Kingsport," Quillin said. "It's in every city. It's all over the place."

Staubus said the ultimate goal for the suit is to try and repair some of the damage that has been done.

"I would like a verdict in our favor which would hold a finding using the legal system that they are liable for what they did to the defendants in this case, a finding that they are responsible for this case," he said. "The second thing is we would like to have money to put in programs to provide rehabilitative services and resources for those who are addicted and the children who were born addicted, whether that is educational, life skills, or medical treatment."

"We would also like to have monies for other resources like vocational training, resources for law enforcement and education. We want to stop people from becoming addicted, and for those who became addicted and their lives have been altered in a severe or measurable way, we want resources for them to pick up the pieces," Staubus said.

The three Northeast Tennessee district attorneys general are not the only ones bringing suits against pharmaceutical companies in Tennessee.

A total of 14 district attorneys general representing 47 of the state's 95 counties have filed three lawsuits against prescription drug manufacturers.

The city of Memphis has also filed a suit against 21 pharmaceutical companies for their role in marketing and selling opioids.

To read the full text of the suit filed by the Northeast Tennessee district attorneys general, visit <a href="https://www.tml1.org/sites/default/files/tml/pdf/opioid\_lawsuit\_filing.pdf">https://www.tml1.org/sites/default/files/tml/pdf/opioid\_lawsuit\_filing.pdf</a>.

# Cities reap benefits through employee wellness programs

**BY KATE COIL**TML Communications Specialist

From Bristol to Memphis, cities across the state of Tennessee are setting an example through employee wellness programs designed to create healthier habits in the workplace.

John Chobanian, vice president of operations with Governor's Foundation for Health and Wellness, said 14 cities across the state are participating in the Healthier TN program as communities while more than 40 are participating in the program as Healthier TN Workplaces. Chobanian said wellness programs have great benefits for government employees as well as private businesses.

"We point to four primary benefits: recruiting and retaining employees, reducing healthcare costs, reducing absenteeism, and increasing productivity," he said.

Local governments can also have a far-reaching impact on their community by having an employee wellness program.

"In many cases, the local government is the largest employer in the county," he said. "With a significant number of covered lives in a given geography, these governments often have a significant impact on a community's health and well-being. They really can be a model that other organizations follow."

Heather Crowder, human resources specialist with the city of Alcoa, said the city's employee wellness program recently expanded to offer cash as well as paid time off to participating employees.

"We are self-insured, so we were looking for a way to lower our costs," she said. "Employees can get discounts through some of the local gyms. If employees do some individual exercise, a partner activity with someone else with the city, run a 5K, have a health screening, or do some sort of volunteer activity in the community they can earn up to four paid-time hours off per quarter or we will add \$50 toward their health spending account they can spend on their deductible. They can earn up to \$200 a year."

The addition of money to the health spending account has greatly increased the number of employees participating in the program.

"We have seen a decline in our health costs," Crowder said. "More importantly, we have seen our employees gain wellness. We want them to see that a healthy lifestyle will benefit them in more areas of their life than just physical wellbeing. It can help with mental wellbeing and getting more involved with the community."

The city has installed exercise equipment at several city-owned facilities. Crowder said this has encouraged many employees to exercise together as a team.

ercise together as a team.

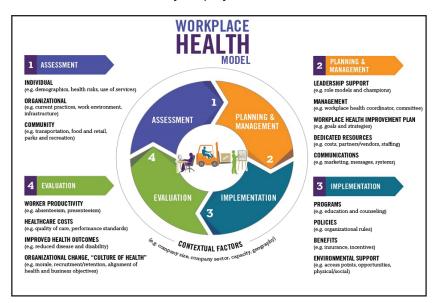
"It's helped our morale," she said. "Our employees feel better in general and gives them a more positive mental attitude. When you're more active you feel better. When our employees work out together, they get to spend time together on a personal level."

Annie Lombard, wellness coordinator with the town of Smyrna, has worked with the city's program since 2016. The program began in 2009.



Photo by Andrew J. Breig / Memphis News

City of Memphis Wellness Education Coordinator Betty Baggett leads a Zumba class in the basement gym at the Memphis City Hall, which is available to all city employees.



Assessment, planning and management, implementation, and evaulation are the four major steps to starting a wellness program.

"We have an on-site gym with a cardio room, weight room, and a studio," she said. "We offer lunchtime classes as well as before work classes two days a week and after work classes two days a week. We have an onsite personal trainer who also serves as a health coach. We also do biometric screenings and health reimbursement accounts that we incentivize."

Lombard said the city also finds ways to get employees involved outside of the workplace.

"We also do programs throughout the year," she said. "We do a 'Watch Your Step' Challenge where we offer a discount for smart devices for employees to track their steps. They are also incentivized for taking a certain amount of steps. That's one of about 10 programs we do every year as part of the larger program."

Tailoring the program to the needs of employees is one way to assure success.

"The biggest thing is making it accessible to everyone," she said. "We initially started having only lunchtime classes but then added before and after work classes. We took feedback from the people who are already in the program and our wellness committee to adjust the program to what the employees want and need."

Lombard said the program has delivered great results, particularly in teambuilding among employees.

"We have multiple departments now where everyone is working out or doing some sort of program," she said. "On an individual basis, we've seen people lose 30-plus pounds after being in the program a year or year-and-a-half. People are coming in with their coworkers before and after work to engage on a personal level while they work out. A big reason our classes are being filled and are successful is because we had employees recruit others to take the class with them."

Lombard said she advocates having an onsite health coach or contact person that can help grow the program and encourage employees.

"One of the big reasons we've had success is because we have onsite people who can be familiar face people trust and build a rapport," she said. "Knowing there is someone who has your trust and has their interest at heart helps spur on success and growth of the program. You have to make the program as accessible as you can. You have to start out small and cater to a small group that you can then grow.

Chobanian said municipalities looking to start their own wellness program can take advantage of the Healthier TN workplace program.

"As workplaces, it's quick, easy, and affordable to start a wellness program with the help of our Small Starts at Work tool and Streaks for Small Starts mobile app," he said. "Both are available at no cost to Tennessee workplaces at HealthierTN.com."

For more information on starting an employee wellness program, visit healthiertn.com/small-starts-at-work.

## SFMO report celebrates lives saved, new training space to better prepare firefighters

**FIRE**, from Page 1

"The State Fire Marshal's Office has a singular mission: to make Tennessee a safer place where families can live, work, and play," said Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal Julie Mix McPeak. "The annual report serves as a statistical snapshot of fire education, prevention and code enforcement efforts in Tennessee. We thank our partners for their help in making Tennessee safer."

Other highlights include:

• While Tennessee fire departments reported 100 fire deaths in Tennessee in 2018 (an 18 percent increase over 85 deaths in 2017) the overall trend for fire deaths in Tennessee is declining. The rate of unintentional fire deaths in 2018 was 14.8 deaths per million in Tennessee.

• Over 21,350 smoke alarms were installed in Tennessee homes through the "Get Alarmed, Tennessee" program. Additionally, 53 Tennesseans escaped residential structure fires

in 2018 thanks to alarms installed through "Get Alarmed, Tennessee!" The program, which started in 2012, received renewed federal grant funding in 2018 continuing the life-saving initiative through at least 2019.

• In October 2018, the Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy (TFACA) celebrated the ceremonial groundbreaking of a new 19,000 square foot conference center. This space will accommodate large and specialty classes, incident management courses, conferences, and graduations. Last year, a total of 14,484 students were enrolled in TFACA and participated in 1,063 classes.

• The Electrical, Residential, and Marina section issues permits and performs inspections to enforce state electrical, building, and energy conservation codes. Following the passage of the Noah Dean and Nate Act in 2015, marina inspections were added to this division's operations. Inspectors successfully completed the inspections of every

Tennessee public marina and dock, correcting numerous safety violations which, if not detected, could have resulted in serious injuries or death

To see the full 2018 SFMO Annual Report, click here, <a href="https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/commerce/documents/fire\_prevention/posts/AnnualFirePreventionReport2018.pdf">https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/commerce/documents/fire\_prevention/posts/AnnualFirePreventionReport2018.pdf</a> For more information about the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office, visit tn.gov/fire.

About the Tennessee Department of Commerce & Insurance: TDCI protects the interests of consumers while providing fair, efficient oversight and a level field of competition for a broad array of industries and professionals doing business in Tennessee. Our divisions include the State Fire Marshal's Office, Insurance, Securities, Consumer Affairs, Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy, Regulatory Boards, Tennessee Emergency Communications Board, Tennessee Corrections Institute, and TennCare Oversight.



## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Michael Borders has left his position as town recorder for the town of Unicoi to take up a position as the town administrator of



Michael Borders

Pittman Center. Borders has served as Unicoi's town recorder since February 2018. He holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a master's degree in public administration from East Tennessee State University. Larry Rae, who retired as Unicoi town recorder in 2016, will hold the position in the interim.

Christine Lapps has been selected as the new deputy commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Revenue.



Christine Lapps

Lapps previously served 12 years as a senior manager and tax manager in state and local tax services for accounting firm Ernst & Young, serving clients in numerous industries ranging from manufacturing to technology to healthcare and retail. Before that, Lapps was a senior tax counsel and hearing officer for the Tennessee Department of Revenue for five years and an assistant attorney general for the state for four years. She holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from Purdue University and a law degree from Vanderbilt University.

Ron Minnicks, finance director for the city of Hendersonville, will retire May 10 after nearly 47 years of



Ron Minnicks

service to the city. Minnicks began working with the city in 1972 – three years after the city officially incorporated – and under his leadership, the city has earned 34 certificates of achievement for excellence in financial reporting. He was promoted to interim finance director for the city in 2010 before taking over the role permanently in 2012.

Todd Moore has been selected as the new city attorney for the city of Carthage following the retirement of



**Todd Moore** 

longtime city attorney David Bass. Moore has advised numerous municipalities on legal matters including Brentwood, Thompson's Station, and Chapel Hill. He founded his private practice in Williamson County in 2000. He also served as a legal consultant for the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service. He holds a bachelor's degree in history from Rhodes College and a law degree from the University of Memphis.

Annette Morgan, finance officer and city recorder for the city of Lafayette, will retire on May 2 after more than 20 years



Annette Morgan

with the city. Morgan started with the city in 1996 as the assistant city recorder and moved into the city recorder position in 2000. During her career, she has served under five mayors and helped oversee local projects such as airport improvements, new playground and parks equipment, and the new council chambers constructed at city hall.

Barbara Sampson will retire as deputy commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Revenue after a 37year career with the department. Sampson began her



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career with the department in 1982, working her way up the ranks to become the first female deputy commissioner for the department. She has served in numerous roles with the department including in the tax policy office and in several audit and executive positions. Sampson holds a bachelor's degree in business administration with a focus in accounting from Austin Peay State University.

Adam Smith has been appointed as the new fire chief for the town of Wartrace. Smith has three years of service with the Wartrace



Adam Smith

Volunteer Fire Department and served as a firefighter for two years in Williamson County. He began his firefighting career as a junior firefighter in Fairview at the age of 13. Smith will soon complete Firefighter One certification and is already certified in as an emergency medical responder, hazmat awareness, and incident command systems.

M a r k Swann, chief auditor for the city of Nashville, is leaving his position for a new job in Texas. Swann will leave



Mark Swann

April 30 to serve as the chief auditor for the city of Dallas, which he said will bring him closer to his children and grandchildren. Swann has served as Nashville's chief auditor since 2007. Prior to coming to Nashville, Swann served as the audit manager and interim city auditor for the city of San Antonio beginning in 2004. He also held positions as an information systems auditor for Saudi Arabia-based gas company Saudi Aramco and as an IT internal auditor for a Texaco Saudi Refining Inc. partnership based in Houston. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Abilene Christian

## Knoxville program brings youth, police officers together

YOUTH, from Page 1

tive on how to approach them. We are also encouraging these young men to think of themselves as valued members of the community and to consider law enforcement as a career. We want them to cooperate with law enforcement when there is an incident in their community. When there is open communication with law enforcement and the community works together it enhances the city as a whole."

Harris said officers with the Knox County Sherriff's Office came to the recent workshop to learn more and hopefully participate in future

"I hope this becomes a model," she said. "By encouraging young men who feel the justice system is not fair or that police officers don't understand them to become involved with these programs improves communications with the police department, the justice system, and the community."

For those who want to create a similar program, Harris said it is important to bring together key community stakeholders.

"I think Knoxville is very for-

tunate to have people in the police department who are willing to work with this program and have a culture of officers who are passionate about being part of the community they serve," she said.

"I would encourage those interested in starting their own program to have conversations with their police department about what the barriers or obstacles to communicating with the community is and what can they do to overcome those barriers," she said. "You should also talk to organizations that are working with at-risk children to see what they think are the obstacles and barriers. Most importantly, you should have a conversation with those youngsters about what they think are issues."

The most important part of the process is listening, Harris said.

"You have to be able to sit down and look from the other person's point of view," she said. "Unfortunately, we have to realize there is also a long history of mistrust between police and African-American communities. We have to work to dispel those myths and breakdown those obstacles so we can thrive as one community.

#### TML Annual Conference June 22-25

**CONFERENCE**, from Page 1 on Saturday afternoon, June 22, Sunday morning, June 23, and throughout the day on Monday, June 24.

Many dynamic workshops will be scheduled throughout the conference. Workshop topics in-

- Managing Your Drug Fund
- Working with Your Development Districts
- Analyze, Implement & Repeat: The Cybersecurity Life Cycle
- Census 2020 Is Your City Ready?
- What are Opportunity Zones and How do They Work?
- High Tech Tools for the Public Sector
- · How Cities Interact with the **Deaf Community**
- · Audit Findings and Reporting
- ADA: What City Leaders Need to Know
- Revenue Forecasting

For more information about the conference and to register, go to www.TML1.org.

#### Schedule At-A-Glance

FRIDAY, JUNE 21 MTAS EOA 1 - 7:45 pm SATURDAY, JUNE 22 8:30 am -12:45 pm MTAS EOA 1 - 5 pm Registration 1-4:30 pm CMFO & **Utility Board** 

Training

SUNDAY, JUNE 23 Golf Outing 6:30 am 9 am - 5 pm Registration Exhibit Hall 9:30 am - 5 pm Workshops 10:30 to 11:30 am 11:30 am - 1:30 pm 1:30 - 2:15 pm District Meetings 2:30 - 4 pm Opening Session Roundtables

Host City 6 - 8 pm Reception Monday, June 24 Breakfast 7:30 - 8:45 AM

9 -10 am Workshops 10:15 - 11 am Second Session 11:15 am - 12 noon Business

Meeting 12 - 1:30 pm Lunch 2:30 - 3:30 pm Workshops Workshops 3:45 - 4:45 pm 6 - 11pm Public Entities

Reception Tuesday, June 25 8 - 10 amAwards Breakfast

Partners

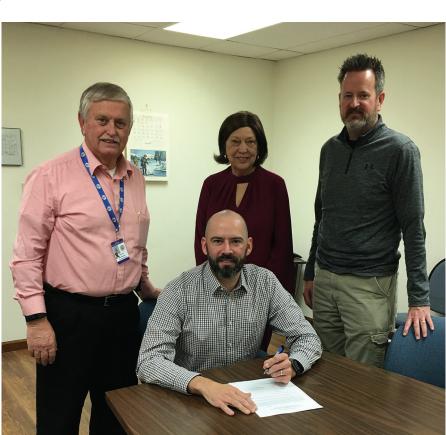
#### 4:15 - 5 pm Contact Natalie Meyer if your community would like to have FREE customized cards for your residents and employees. Phone: (888) 987-0688, or email: natalie@tennesseedrugcard.com; www.tennesseedrugcard.com

University.

## No loan is too large or too small



The city of Townsend recently closed a \$500,000 loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund to finance a new community center and town hall. Seated left to right: Mayor Ron Palewski and City Recorder Danny Williamson. Standing is Steve Queener, TMBF Marketing Representative.



McMinnville recently closed a \$10 million fixed-rate loan with the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund to finance the renovations and additions to the city's civic center including ADA compliance issues. Standing left to right are: City Administrator Bill Brock, City Recorder Shirley Durham, and Director of Parks and Recreation Scott McCord. Seated is Mayor Ben Newman.



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## STATE BRIEFS

Tennessee is the state with the third lowest tax burden, according to a recent study. Financial planning website WalletHub found Tennessee had an overall tax burden of 6.28 percent. The state also is in the bottom five states for lowest property tax as percent of personal income at 1.9 percent and in the bottom ten states for individual income tax burden at 0.11 percent. The one category the state did rank highly in are its total sales and excise tax burden, which is the eleventh highest in the nation.

The Tennessee Valley Authority is investing \$150 million to reinforce the Pickwick Dam in West Tennessee against earthquakes. The project will involve about 1 million tons of rock and sand and will begin this fall with an estimated completion date of 2021. The dam was originally constructed in 1938, and TVA officials say its clay core could create flooding similar to what was experienced in 2013. The dam has since been equipped with an updated warning system that added 30 instruments to measure seismic activity. The dam's proximity to the New Madrid Fault Line as well as its age are of major concern to officials, who plan to conduct an earthquake incident simulation later in June.

Tennessee students may return to paper-based testing next school year to allow for the state to transition between companies offering computerized exams. Gov. Bill Lee's office announced that the state will be moving from current vendor, Questar Assessment, to a new company to administer the

TNReady testing. The Tennessee Department of Education is seeking other offers after several years of issues with Questar's services. In order to return students to paper testing in the interim, a bill will have to pass the Legislature to exempt next year's standardized tests from computer requirements.

Scientists have released 89 lake sturgeon into the Tennessee River as part of ongoing efforts to replenish the endangered species. Researchers from Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute and the state Wildlife Resources Agency released the fish with tracking tags to help maintain the river's ecosystem. The fish once thrived in the U.S. but nearly went extinct in the 1970s due to overfishing, water quality, and dam building. One of three native sturgeon species found in Tennessee, they can grow up to nine feet long, weight hundreds of pounds, and live to 150. The fish also have a critical role in maintaining the marine ecosystem of state rivers.

Tennessee has the sixth fastest growing arts and cultural sector of any state in the nation, according to a report recently released by National Endowment for the Arts, the Bureau of Economic Analysis and the Office of Research and Analysis at the National Endowment for the Arts. Tennessee reported a 7.8 percent growth in arts and culture, above the national average of 5.9 percent, and saw \$14.2 billion in value added to the state's economy because of the arts. Nearly 87,000 people are employed in arts industries in Tennessee.

## Nominations open for **TDEC's Sustainable** Transportation Awards

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) invites nominations for the fifth annual Tennessee Sustainable Transportation Awards. Deadline for nominations to be submitted is June 14. Winners will be announced at the Tennessee Sustainable Transportation Awards and Forum, which will take place on Oct. 1-2 in Knoxville.

"The awards recognize outstanding initiatives to improve the efficiency, accessibility, affordability and sustainability of transportation systems in Tennessee," said TDEC Assistant Commissioner Molly Cripps. "Projects should protect and enhance our state's natural resources, complement our efforts to improve the health and well-being of Tennesseans, and provide for a strong economy."

A panel of reviewers representing an array of interests will select award winners based on the following criteria:

• Innovation – how the project utilized new thinking or creative approaches to meet a particular transportation challenge;

- Best Practices and Replicability
- how the project demonstrates a transferable solution, such that others could adopt or implement similar programs or initiatives;
- · Changes in Transportation Behavior – how a project worked to encourage or achieve changes in transportation behavior in order to make a transportation system more efficient;
- Improvements to Public Health and Safety – how a project creates improvements to public health, well-being or safety in a given community.

Eligible applicants include federal, state and local governments; commercial, nonprofit and industrial organizations; public and private institutions of higher education; and utilities. Entities must be located in Tennessee and the project must have been completed in the last five years. All nominees must be in environmental compliance with TDEC. Self-nominations are encouraged.

More information, including the application, is at https://www. tn.gov/environment/TSTA.



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of making payments on time. GovCard/APS are national leaders and has grown to be one of the US Top 50 payment processors. They have partnerships with banks, chambers and associations in 12 states.

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Visit their website at www. govcard.org/tennesseemunici-<u>palleague</u>

## TACIR reports some \$50B needed for infrastructure improvements

Tennessee needs at least \$49.8 billion of public infrastructure improvements during the fiveyear period of July 2017 to June 2022—a \$5 billion (11.1 percent) increase from the year before according to a new report by the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR).

Improvements needed for Transportation and Utilities, Education, and Health, Safety, and Welfare infrastructure continue to account for most of the inventory, with Education and Transportation and Utilities infrastructure needs responsible for most of the reported increase this year. More than twothirds of the estimated cost of needed infrastructure improvements included in this year's report is not funded, unchanged from last year.

Costs for current infrastructure needs fall into six general categories:

- Transportation and Utilities: \$25.9 billion
- Education: \$13.6 billion
- Health, Safety, and Welfare:
- \$7.4 billion Recreation and Culture: \$1.9 billion
- General Government: \$698 million
- Economic Development: \$366

Transportation and Utilities has always been the single largest category and remains so. Estimated cost of needs in this category increased \$1.2 billion (4.8 percent) from last year to a current total of \$25.9 billion. Most of this increase was caused by the \$1.2 billion (5 percent) increase in the total estimated cost of transportation infrastructure needs. This includes \$2.8 billion in new projects (Improve Act accounts for \$1.6 billion) and \$1 billion in project cost increases (Improve Act accounts for \$277 million).

But these increases are partially offset by \$968 million in completed projects, \$261 million in canceled projects, and \$146



million for postponed projects no longer deemed necessary within this report's five-year window.

Moreover, state and local officials reported \$451 million in reduced costs for projects already in the inventory. Projects totaling \$851 million were removed from the inventory because improved methods of project tracking and quality control identified duplicates and invalid information.

The estimated cost for needed infrastructure improvements for other utilities decreased by \$16 million (3.2 percent) and now totals \$489 million. In response to recommendations in the Commission's 2017 report about broadband internet access and adoption, public infrastructure needed for broadband is now reported in the inventory as its own project type and now totals \$19 million.

Education is the second largest category and increased \$3.2 billion (30.8 percent) to \$13.6 billion. The cost of improvements needed for four of the five infrastructure types reported in the Education category increased this year. The \$2.2 billion (80.6 percent) increase in the need for improvements to existing schools, which itself is primarily attributable to a \$2 billion increase reported for Metro Nashville Public Schools, is the main reasons the total estimated cost for education infrastructure increased. This year, local officials reported they need \$4.9 billion for improve-

ments to existing public schools. This includes \$4.7 billion for renovations, \$125 million for technology upgrades, and \$91 million to address state and federal mandates.

The need for new schools and additions totals \$3.6 billion, of which \$3 billion is for new schools and \$633 million is for additions. Of the \$3 billion total needed to build new schools, \$972 million is for 24 new school projects added to the inventory this year by 12 school systems. Of these 24 new school projects, almost half are needed in Rutherford and Wilson counties, which each need five new schools.

Some of the need for additions and improvements to existing space are caused by the condition of the school. Although local school officials rated just under 10.7 percent of public schools (185) in Tennessee to be in fair or poor condition, 169 of those schools need improvements to existing space and account for 40.2 percent of the total estimated cost for improving existing space.

Information about funding for public infrastructure needs reported by officials indicates that 68.5 percent of the funds required to meet those needs was not available at the time the inventory was conducted, relatively unchanged from last year's 68.9 percent. Excluding improvements needed at existing schools and those drawn from capital budget requests submitted by state agencies, neither of which includes funding information, only \$11.6 billion in funding is available for the remaining \$37 billion in needs.

This report includes a single statewide overview chapter with information by type of infrastructure, the condition and needs of our public school facilities, the availability of funding to meet reported needs, and a comparison of county-area needs. Following that section, one-page summaries for each county- area list the estimated cost for all types of infrastructure by stage of development.

The summaries also highlight the top three types of infrastructure improvements needed in each county based on total estimated cost and provide comparisons of the infrastructure needed at public school systems to student enroll-

Further detailed county-area information about each type of infrastructure in the inventory, along with relevant legislation, inventory forms, and a glossary of terms, can be found in the appendixes to the report.

The full report is available on TACIR's web site at <a href="https://www.">https://www.</a> tn.gov/tacir/infrastructure/infrastructure-reports-/building-tennessee-s-tomorrow-2017- 2022.

For more information, contact Dave Keiser, Project Manager, at david.keiser@tn.gov or 615-253-4237.



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#### ASSISTANT CITY RECORDER

MILLERSVILLE. The city of Millersville is accepting applications and resumes for assistant city recorder. This position will assist in the accounting, administrative and support services of the city including, but not limited to, accounts payable, purchasing, payroll, general accounting, cash management, risk and asset management, utility accounting and property taxes. Annual salary \$32,000-\$47,000 DOQ plus benefit package. Application and complete job description available on the city's website at www.cityofmillersville.com or apply at Millersville City Hall, 1246 Louisville Highway, Millersville, TN 37072, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. or email application/resume to cityrecorder@cityofmillersville.com. Position open until filled. EOE.

#### ASSISTANT FINANCE OFFICER

OLIVER SPRINGS. The town of Oliver Springs is seeking applications and resumes for the position of assistant finance officer. This position works in a team environment providing a variety of administrative support services and is primarily responsible for the collection and recording of all payments made to the city for, property and business taxes, court fines and miscellaneous receipts. Schedule is generally 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday and may involve overtime which could include evenings, weekends and holidays. An online application is available on the city website at http://oliversprings-tn.gov/FormCenter/ Employment-Applications-5/Street-Water-Sewer-Application-38. If applying online, please email all supporting documentation to City Manager Thomas McCormick at oscitymanager@comcast.net. Position open until filled. Any questions about applying can be directed to City Manager Thomas McCormick at oscitymanager@comcast.net or 865-435-7722.

#### **BUILDING INSPECTOR ELECTRICAL**

COLLIERVILLE. The town of Collierville has an immediate opening for and electrical building inspector. This position performs responsible enforcement of town codes and ordinances and investigative work in the inspection of all town commercial, industrial, and residential structures and properties. This position requires high school diploma or GED supplemented by technical or college level courses in building construction, electrical, mechanical, or structural engineering or related areas; and five years of experience in the building construction industry, skilled construction trades or in comparable code enforcement work, three of which must be in the assigned area of electrical trades; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job. Must obtain two certifications from the International Code Council as a residential and commercial inspector in the assigned area of responsibility within 12 months of employment and maintain certifications throughout employment. Must have valid motor vehicle operator's license at the time of hire. May require attending meetings after normal business hours. Candidate must be able to pass a work related physical and drug test. Salary is depending on qualifications, with excellent benefits package. To apply for this position, you must submit an original Town of Collierville application. Applications are available to download at www.collierville.com or you may obtain one from our Human Resources Office located at 500 Poplar View Parkway, Collierville, TN, 38017, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Completed applications must be submitted either by mail or in person to the above address.

**BUILDING INSPECTOR** HUMBOLDT. The city of Humboldt has an immediate opening for a state of Tennessee certified building inspector. The city desires the certified building inspector to also be a state of tennessee certified electrical inspector. The employee will be responsible for technical work in the enforcement of building and zoning codes and city ordinances. Duties also include other support services under the general supervision of the Mayor. Minimum qualifications: High school diploma/equivalent and current certification as building inspector through the state of Tennessee. Applications may be obtained at the mayor's office located at 1201 Main Street, Humboldt, TN 38343, M-F, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Completed applications must be submitted either by mail or in person at the above address, fax (731-784-9072) or email (mpatterson@clickl. net), with Building Inspector Application in the subject line. EOE.

#### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR**

SPARTA. Qualified applicants are being sought by the city of Sparta, with a seven-member council and a population of 5.071, for the position of city administrator. The city has an annual budget of \$20 million with approximately 80 fulltime employees. The position oversees the day-to-day operations of the city and supervises all department heads, including police, fire, public works, water, sewer, and electric. The successful candidate must have a bachelor's degree in public/

business management or related field and three years of government management experience or seven years of government experience. A master's degree and city management experience desired. Skills in budgeting, utility management, personnel issues, public safety, and long-range planning are essential. The successful candidate must have strong leadership, financial management, and interpersonal skills with experience in planning, land use, residential development, and infrastructure expansion. Salary: mid \$80s to high \$90s, DOO.Resumes, along with a Cover Letter and three professional references must be received by April 29 at: The University of Tennessee, Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 120 Conference Center Building. Knoxville, TN 37996-4105, Attn: Warren Nevad. Electronic submissions shall be received at armintha.loveday@tennessee.edu. Competitive salary and benefits package; including retirement, health and life insurance, Open until filled. EOE.

#### **DIVISION MANAGER / WATER ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES** WORKER I

GALLATIN. The city of Gallatin is currently accepting applications for an Environmental Services Worker I in the Public Works Department. This is a 40 hours per week, day shift position with some weekend work required. The starting rate is \$12.46 + excellent benefits. The following duties are normal for this position. These are not to be construed as exclusive or all-inclusive. Other duties may be required and assigned. Collects, pulls and dumps garbage and trash. Assists operator(s) and supervisor. Pulls refuse containers from houses or business establishments and dumps into trucks and operates packer equipment. Cleans area around refuse containers. Picks up limbs, brush, newspapers and other trash. Directs traffic and guides truck operator in congested areas. Assists driver in checking truck and packer for operation. Applicants must possess a combination of education and experience equivalent to completion of the eighth grade and have a valid driver's license. Interested persons should apply on-line at www.gallatintn. gov. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. EOE.

#### FACILITIES MAINTENANCE **MECHANIC**

GALLATIN. The Gallatin Public Works Department is currently accepting applications for facilities maintenance mechanic. The purpose of this position is to perform skilled work in general building and facilities maintenance, and in other areas owned or managed by the city. This is a 40 hrs per week, day shift position with some weekend work required. The starting rate is \$15.91 + excellent benefits. Position requires high school diploma/equivalent. Must have post high school education in maintenance or construction. Must have 2 years recent work experience in maintenance, construction, or building repair. Must possess a valid driver's license. To see the full job description and to apply, visit www.gallatintn.gov. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. Telephone 615-451-5890 (HR/Person-

#### FINANCE DIRECTOR

HENDERSONVILLE. This position directs the activities of the finance department, including managing the city's financial activities and overseeing Human Resources and Risk Management functions. Assigns, directs, supervises, evaluates, and disciplines personnel; coordinates daily work activities. Plans, organizes, and manages the city's finances, including investments, cash management, revenues, disbursements, budget management, cost controls, general accounting, financial accounting and reporting, or other financial activities. Capable of completing Section 400 Codes and Policies Audit processes. Interprets, explains, applies, and ensures compliance with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations. Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited college or university in accounting, finance, business administration, public administration, or a similar field. Must meet the state of Tennessee qualifications in Tennessee Code Annotated listed below: Must be a Certified Municipal Finance Officer (CMFO); or One of the following exempt designations and must comply with the continuing educational requirements of 6-56-404 and obtain approval by the Comptroller of the Treasury per § 6-56-405: An individual designated as a Certified Government Finance Manager (CGFM) by the Association of Government Accountants; An individual designated as a Certified Public Finance Officer (CPFO) by the Government Finance Officers Association; An individual licensed as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) by the State Board of Accountancy and in active status who has a minimum of five years of primarily government experience with at least three of those years in the state of Tennessee. Ten years of progressively responsible experience in governmental accounting and finance, including at least five years supervisory experience in local government financial administration or similar operational department. Must have a valid driver's license. To apply for this position, please send resume to marlene.

#### FIRE CHIEF

guillen@odshr.com

FAYETTEVILLE. The city of Fayetteville is seeking an experienced, energetic, team builder with exceptional leadership skills to be their next fire chief. This is an exceptional opportunity to serve in a progressive organization with a superb staff. The fire chief's position requires an individual that has demonstrated sound judgment, human resources skills, organizational development expertise, and a can-do work ethic. The fire chief is a highly visible city department head that is expected to project a professional image of self, the department, and the city in all situations. The city offers a competitive salary and benefits package to the successful candidate. The position profile is available for review at <a href="http://www.fayettevilletn">http://www.fayettevilletn</a>. com. Mail or email cover letter, résumé, employment application, and evidence of all professional credentials to Fayetteville HR Coordinator, at 110 Elk Avenue South, Fayetteville TN, 37334 or agay@ fayettevilletn.com. Application packets must be in the HR office no later than noon May 1 (CST).

#### GAS SERVICE WORKER

GALLATIN. The city of Gallatin is currently accepting applications for gas service worker. The purpose of this position is to perform semi-skilled work assisting in the construction, repair and maintenance of gas utility lines and related fixtures involving the use of specialized tools. Some essential duties include responding to gas leaks, installation of gas utility lines, meters, regulators, and related facilities. This is a 40-hours-per-week, day-shift position with some weekend work required. The starting rate is \$15.91 + excellent benefits. The successful candidate should have knowledge of the maintenance, repair and manual tasks in gas utility work as well as knowledge of the safe use and operation and preventive maintenance of mechanical equipment required in the work. At a minimum, applicants must have a high school diploma/equivalent, with one year of recent work experience in equipment operation or utilities experience; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Applicants must also have a valid, appropriate driver's license. Must successfully complete Operator Qualification training administered by the Gallatin Natural Gas Department within 6 months of hire/ promotion into the class, and must retain qualification throughout employment in order to work on the city of Gallatin's natural gas system. This position is subject to DOT Pipeline and Hazardous Materials SafetyAdministration(PHMSA)drugand alcohol testing as outlined in 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 199. To see the full job description and apply, visit www.gallatintn.gov. Applications will be

#### LIBRARY ASSISTANT

accepted until the position is filled. EOE.

COLLIERVILLE. The town of Collierville's Burch Library has an opening for a part-time library assistant. The purpose of this position is to provide a range of basic library customer support services related to the acquisition, cataloging, and maintaining of library materials. Requires a high school diploma or GED; supplemented by one year of previous experience and/ or training in office management, office administration, customer service, record management and area of assignment; or any equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities for this job. Must have the flexibility to work evenings and weekends to meet required staffing levels of the library. Must obtain a valid driver's license within six months of hire date and maintain throughout employment. Salary is \$12/hour with limited benefits package. To apply for this position, you must submit an official town of Collierville Application. Applications are available to download at www.collierville. com, or you may obtain one from our Human Resources Office located at 500 Poplar View Parkway, Collierville, TN, 38017, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Completed applications must be submitted either by mail or in person to the above address. EOE.

#### MAINTENANCE WORKER

COLLIERVILLE. The town of Collierville has an immediate opening for a maintenance worker. This is semi-skilled and unskilled manual work as part of a public works/utilities crew performing routine maintenance and construction tasks for various public works/utilities projects. Must possess high school diploma or GED; previous experience and/or training in maintenance and construction work in area of assignment is preferred; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job. Must possess a valid driver's license at the time of hire. Salary is \$24,960, depending on qualifications, with excellent benefits package. To apply for this position, you must submit an Town of Collierville application. Applications are available to download at www.collierville.com, or you may obtain one from our Human Resources Office located at 500 Poplar View Pkwy, Collierville, TN, 38017, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. EOE.

#### NATURAL GAS CONSTRUCTION COORDINATOR/INSPECTOR

GALLATIN. The city of Gallatin Public Utilities Department is currently accepting applications for a natural gas construction coordinator/Ii is to perform technical and administrative work in the inspection, installation, construction, repair, and maintenance of natural gas lines and appurtenances. This is a 40-hours-perweek, day-shift position. Weekend work required. The starting rate is \$19.33 per

hour + excellent benefits. High School Diploma/equivalent, with two to five years recent work experience in natural gas distribution operations or related field; or an equivalent combination of education, experience, and training. Must have a valid, appropriate driver's license. To see the full job description and apply, visit www.gallatintn.gov. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. EOE.

#### **POLICE CHIEF**

SPARTA. The city of Sparta is seeking qualified applicants for the position of police chief. The successful candidate will oversee a total of 14 investigators and uniform officers. Directly supervises one secretary. Is responsible for the overall direction, coordination, and evaluation of the department. Carries out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the organization's policies and applicable laws. The police chief is appointed by and works under the general supervision of the city administrator. Bachelor's degree in law enforcement, criminal science, or related field and eight to 10 years of law enforcement experience; or equivalent combination of education and experience required. Open until filled. A completed application may be accompanied with a resume. A job description and additional application information is available by contacting the City of Sparta, P.O. Box 30, Sparta, TN 38583; by phone-931-836-3248; or by email 1.jeffries@spartatn.gov.

#### POLICE OFFICER

COLLIERVILLE. The town of Collierville has multiple openings for a police officer. This position involves the performance of responsible, general duty police work in protecting the life, persons, and property of the citizens of the town of Collierville through even-handed enforcement of laws and ordinances. Must have an associate degree (60+ semester hours) from an accredited college; or two years' previous experience as a full-time law enforcement officer; or two years of active duty military experience. A degree in criminal justice or a related field is preferred, however, majors with a concentration in management, technology, behavioral sciences, physical education or other related fields are acceptable; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job. Incumbents must be citizens of the U.S. Applicant must possess an honorable discharge and provide a DD214, if they have prior experience in the Armed Forces. Must possess upon hire or complete within six months of hire the State of Tennessee Police Officer P.O.S.T. certification and maintain appropriate certification throughout employment. Must be in compliance with TCA 38-8-106. Applicants must have the ability to pass a work-related physical proficiency/ agility test, a medical/physical examination, a psychological examination and background investigation. Must possess and maintain a valid driver's license. The work of this job requires sufficient physical strength, stamina, and ability to pass a work-related physical proficiency test and pre-employment examination. The work is physically demanding may require lifting heavy objects, and may require working in inclement weather. All new hires must successfully complete a 365-day training and assessment period. Starting salary is \$36,000 annually (DOQ) with excellent benefits package. To apply for this position, you must submit an original Town of Collierville application. Applications are available to download at www.collierville. com, or you may obtain one from our Human Resources Office located at 500 Poplar View Parkway, Collierville, TN, 38017, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Completed applications must be submitted either by mail or in person to the above address. We are unable to accept faxed or emailed applications.

#### POLICE OFFICER.

SHELBYVILLE. The Shelbyville Police Department will be accepting applications for police officer. Successful applicants will be required to pass a background check, physical, psychological, and drug/ alcohol test prior to final consideration for the position. Applicants must be minimum age of 21 years old. Must have and maintain a valid TN driver's license with a good driving record. Must be a high school graduate or equivalent. Must be a citizen of the U.S. Must not have been convicted of a felony or a serious misdemeanor involving moral turpitude as the term is defined by law, and not to have been released or discharged under any other than honorable conditions from any of the armed forces of the U.S. Must be free of all apparent mental disorders as described in the Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Third Edition (DSM-11) of the American Psychiatric Association and must be certified as meeting the criteria by a qualified professional in psychiatric and psychological fields. Current Tennessee POST-certified officer applicants desired, but all will be considered. Applications and a copy of the full job description will be accepted until position is filled and may be returned to City Hall Administration Office, 201 N. Spring Street Shelbyville, TN 37160. Applications and job descriptions can be picked up at city hall or download from the city website: www.shelbyvilletn. org EOE.

#### PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

HENDERSONVILLE. The city of Hendersonville is accepting applications for a public works director of the public works department. This position directs all operations of the public works, roads,

and IT departments. As of March 2019, this position ultimately has roughly 40 full-time employees under their supervision between the public works, roads, and IT departments. Minimum qualifications include: bachelor's degree in a course of study related to the occupational field. Master's degree preferred. Three to five years of related experience. Possession of or ability to readily obtain a valid driver's license issued by the state of Tennessee for the type of vehicle or equipment operated. Certification as a professional engineer required. Entry level salary \$99,287 or higher DOQ. Exempt status. To apply visit http://www.hvilletn.org/and view the Job Openings page or come by the Personnel Department at Hendersonville City Hall located at 101 Maple Drive North in Hendersonville, TN. Applications accepted until April 26, at 4 p.m. CST. EOE.

#### TOWN CLERK

THOMPSON'S STATION. The town of Thompson's Station is accepting applications for the position of town clerk. The town clerk provides a broad range of administrative support activities for the town. Applicants should have a high school diploma or GED. Associate's degree in business management, accounting or closely related field prefered. At least three years experience in clerical work, accounts receivable and administrative support functions. Must have ability to be bonded. Salary DOQ. This position is open until filled. Applications are available at www.thompsons-station.com. Please send resumes and town application to Caryn Miller, asssistant town administrator at cmiller@thompsons-station.com. EOE.

#### TRANSPORTATION/LONG

**RANGE PLANNER** CLEVELAND. The city of Cleveland is accepting applications for the position of transportation/long range planner. Qualified applicants will have graduated from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree in community planning, transportation planning, public administration, engineering, landscape architecture or other related field. A minimum 2-4 years of transportation planning related experience is desirable. A related master's degree and/or AICP certification are desired and may be considered as a partial substitute for experience. Experience with GIS is required and experience with TransCad transportation modeling software is desirable. Experience with website maintenance and social media communication is desirable. Experience in the collection and analysis of data relevant to issues in passenger and freight transportation issues is important, as is experience in multi-modal transportation planning issues. Understanding of the relationships between land use and economic development and transportation planning is important. Proof of education and experience is required. valid Tennessee driver's license required. The transportation/long range planner will have a role in the development and maintenance of the planning documents and processes for the MPO, including the Unified Planning and Work Program (UPWP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) The transportation/long range planner's work will include collecting and analyzing data and preparing maps, reports and other planning documents; for the purpose of making recommendations and providing information to the MPO Coordinator and others for use in the MPO's transportation planning process. The transportation/ long range planner will participate in transportation corridor studies and other duties as assigned. In addition to preparing written reports, the transportation/long range planner will be able to represent the MPO in meetings of technical staff, transportation officials, and others, and assist with the MPO's public participation efforts and performs other duties as assigned. Interested applicants should submit a resume with cover letter and three references to the City of Cleveland Human Resources Department Office, PO Box 1519, Cleveland, TN 37364-1519 or submit by email to Kimberly Spence, HR Director at kspence@clevelandtn.gov who may be contacted at (423)-472-4551 for questions. The anticipated starting salary range is approximately \$45,024 to \$50,427, depending upon qualifications. The city offers a competitive benefits package. The position will be open until filled.

#### WATER DISTRIBUTION **SUPERVISOR**

OLIVER SPRINGS. The town of Oliver Springs is seeking applications and resumes for the position of water distribution supervisor. This employee is responsible for supervising the entire fieldwork of the water distribution department and is supervised by the utilities director. The employee supervises and participates in the daily duties of the water distribution department. This position requires a Tennessee Grade II Distribution System Operator Certification. The water distribution supervisor's schedule is generally 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday and may involve overtime which could include evenings, weekends, holidays and on-call. An online application is available on the city website at <a href="http://oliversprings-tn.">http://oliversprings-tn.</a> gov/FormCenter/Employment-Applications-5/Street-Water-Sewer-Application-38. If applying online, please email all supporting documentation to City Manager Thomas McCormick at oscitymanager@comcast.net. The town will continue receiving applications for this position until filled. Any questions about applying can be directed to City Manager Thomas McCormick at oscitymanager@ comcast.net or 865-435-7722.

#### Tennessee Municipal League 2018-2019 Officers and Directors

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## Three keys to economic viability of small towns

The goal is not only to get people to visit your community, but to get them to want to live and work there.

BY ROGER ZALNERAITIS Governing Magazine

A sign in Denver International Airport says it all: "60-70 million people per year are moving to cities in the next three decades," reads the advertisement from an investment management firm. The ad goes on to call this global migration "the greatest population shift in history."

How can rural small towns stay economically viable in the face of such dramatic changes?

Here in the U.S., rising disposable income and changes in how people work provide an opportunity to succeed. Begin by getting people to stop in your community, then turn to getting people to live in your community, before finishing by getting people to work in your community.

Getting people to stop in your town may seem easy to do. Each year tourists spend more than \$1 trillion in the U.S. If you have a gas station, a hotel and a restaurant, you should be able to at least get an occasional latenight driver to spend money there.

However, that is accidental tourism. Intentional tourism means giving people a reason to come to your town. For instance, we named our daughter in part after Amelia Earhart. It was therefore no big deal for

us to go a little out of our way last summer to show her the town (and spend money) where the pioneering aviator was born: Atchison, Kan. Other places, like Williamsport, Pa. (Little League Baseball) or Rapid City, S.D. (Mount Rushmore) know what makes their town unique and make it a centerpiece of their identity.

While not every town has the luck to have a tourist magnet like Mount Rushmore nearby, almost every community has something that makes it unique — a quirky museum, perhaps, or distinctive downtown architecture, or an important but nearly forgotten historical event in its past. Find out what that is for your town. Brand it, promote it, celebrate it. People who share your community's values or interests will come to spend time and money – in the place you call

Once you have discovered your town's unique identity, some people will want to live there because of it. What will it take to keep them?

Neighborhood quality is first on the list. Desirable and affordable housing is a cornerstone of a good neighborhood. Blight is an issue in many places, so developing plans to combat it, including removing vacated properties, is critical.

Right after housing, though, comes safety and schools. People with children won't stay in places with bad schools or where crime is a threat to those they love. Working with your school district and police

department on these issues is the next priority for getting people to live in your town.

Only after having quality housing, safety and education can you turn to "sexy" amenities like enjoyable parks, vibrant downtowns, and a thriving arts and culture scene. Every town needs these things. Without good neighborhoods, though, these amenities will not be enough to keep people living in your town.

Once you have people stopping in your town and living in it, you can start the process of getting people to work in your community rather than driving off every morning to make their living somewhere

Why does work come last? First of all, job trends are emphasizing individual choice. Since 2005, the strongest job creation in the U.S. has been among sole proprietors and home-based workers. People with these jobs can focus on the town that fits their needs rather than the place their employer (if they have one) has an office.

Some of these sole proprietors and home-based workers do go on to form companies that create jobs. Several years ago, the economic-development organization where I worked did a study of businesses in western Colorado. We identified at least 85 sole proprietors who had moved to the Western Slope and were then employing well over 2,000 people. This is a significant source of economic diversity in the region.

What small towns often lack is enough growth to attract capital to create space for growing companies. Public-private partnerships can bridge that gap, helping create space and opportunities for companies to start, grow and remain local. Small towns succeed when everyone steps in to help their local businesses stay and thrive.

Staying relevant in this unprecedented age of urbanization is challenging. Giving people a reason to stop in your town by defining and capitalizing on your unique characteristics, live in it by focusing on neighborhoods, and then work in it through collaborative development efforts is a sound approach to keep your community thriving.



#### May 3: Franklin

Eat the Street Food Truck Festival More than 30 food trucks will descend on Franklin's Bicentennial Park from 5 to 10 p.m. A portion of the evening's proceeds will benefit the 21st District Recovery Court, an alternative-sentencing program that aims to assist nonviolent offenders with addiction issues through an intensive two-year, court-supervised recovery program. For more info, visit https://visitfranklin.com/ events/eat-the-street-2019.

#### May 3-5: Memphis Beale Street Music Festival

The Beale Street Music Festival is a three-day, four-stage event in Memphis, featuring more than 60 top musical acts from today and beyond. The 2019 lineup is out and features performances from Dave Matthews Band, The Killers, Cardi B, Khalid and many more. Visit www.memphisinmay.org for more info.

#### May 7: Greeneville

30th Annual Taste of Greeneville Local restaurants and others in the food industry will provide attendees with samples of food, drinks, or desserts. Some will offer coupons and specials that only those attending will receive. The event will begin at 6 p.m. at the General Morgan Inn Terrace at 111 North Main Street. Tickets are \$15 and are on sale now. For further information, contact the Main Street Greeneville office at 423-639-7102.

#### May 11: Portland

78th Annual Middle Tennessee Strawberry Festival

Enjoy live music, more than 100 food and craft vendors, bingo, inflatables and kids activities, a carnival, 5K walk/run, and more. The parade will be at 4 p.m. followed by a free concert at 6:30 p.m. featuring Lee Gibson on the Market Street stage. Fireworks will follow the concert in the downtown Portland area. For more info, visit www.middletnstrawberryfestival.com.

### NATIONAL BRIEFS

The U.S economy added 196,000 jobs in March, rebounding from the only 33,000 reported in February. The U.S. Department of Labor reported the national unemployment rate and held steady at 3.8 percent as the labor force participation rate stayed even at 63 percent. Hourly earnings have increased by 3.2 percent in the past 12 months, lower than the rate of 3.4 percent in February. The March gains bring the total average monthly employment growth to 180,000 for the first quarter of 2019. The health care sector and the professional and technical service sector saw the most significant share of employment growth in March, adding 49,000 jobs and 34.000 jobs each. The construction sector added just 16,000 jobs in March, while the manufacturing sector lost 6,000 jobs.

Officials are crediting the opioid epidemic for the rise in the number of children in foster care and dependent on child welfare agencies. The National Conference of State Legislatures found that there were 433,000 children in foster care in 2017 – the highest number since 2008. Of those 433,000 children, nearly 270,000 entered care that same year, a slight decrease over 2016. The number of children under the age of 1 entering foster care has become the highest percentage of children entering care and the number of children being removed from the home due to parental drug or alcohol abuse as more than doubled in the past 20 years.

An estimated 4 in 10 U.S. adults - roughly 100 million Americans - are planning on taking a family vacation in 2019, according to the American Automobile Association (AAA). The number of Americans planning vacations this year is up from last year with road trips ranking among the top plans for travel with 53 percent of survey respondents planning one this year. Approximately 68 percent of families have a summer vacation planned while 45 percent have a spring trip planned. Travelers who live in the American South are more likely to plan a trip than those in the Northeast.

## **UT-MTAS APRIL MAP CLASSES**

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**Dates/Locations/Times:** May 14 Knoxville

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**Target Audience** All Municipal Employees

Credits: (4 CPE)

THE UNIVERSITY of IENNESSEE 67 MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL Advisory Service

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Water and Wastewater Systems

## Sen. Steve Dickerson balances local needs, state politics

New Senate State and Local Committee Chairman splits time between medical practice and the Legislative Plaza but still finds time to rock out on and off the campaign trail.

BY KATE COIL

TML Communications Specialist

First elected to represent Tennessee's Senate District 20 in 2013, Steve Dickerson, R-Nashville, was selected to chair the Senate's State and Local Government Committee earlier this year.

Born in Iowa and raised in South Carolina, Dickerson's first introduction to the state of Tennessee was attending college at the University of the South in Sewanee.

He left the state to earn his medical degree at Wake Forest University in North Carolina, where he also met his wife Katrina. When it came time for the couple to put down roots, they moved to Nashville in 1996.

Dickerson has been a resident of the Music City ever since, raising three sons and working as an anesthesiologist and interventional pain management doctor for more than 20 years. In that time, he has served on the Board of Trustees of the Tennessee Medical Association, been chairman of the Board of the Middle Tennessee School of Medicine, been president of the Tennessee Society of Anesthesiologists, and been elected chief of staff of two local hospitals.

He has the unique distinction of being the only Republican lawmaker with a district completely inside Metro-Nashville-Davidson County. As a result, he says he often bridges the gap between the Republican Party and the coalition of Davidson County legislators. Dickerson describes himself as a "thoughtful" and "constitutional" conservative.

In recent years, Dickerson's practice has been based at the Hendersonville Medical Center, where he also served as chief of staff. Since he's still working, his daily schedule is nothing short of a whirlwind. He's in the operating room for a large portion of the day and hustles to Legislative Plaza, typically in the afternoon, to attend sessions, committee meetings and meet with constituents.

Lt. Gov. Randy McNally said Dickerson has already proven to be a more than capable leader of the Senate Local State and Local Government Committee.

"He's really done a bang-up job for just being on the job a month and a half," McNally said. "He was an obvious choice to lead this committee, and I was proud to name him to that spot."

When he's not working on legislative issues or with his patients, Dickerson is sharing his love of music with his sons. Playing both at home and on the campaign trail, Dickerson admits that "he won't be quitting his day job anytime soon" to pursue a career in music.

TT&C: What first drew you to medicine? Steve Dickerson: That's a great question with a strange answer. I come from a family of lawyers. My siblings all have law degrees. I was moving toward law school myself, but I decided I want to do something different. I talked to a couple of medical school students, and then I had an uncle who was the patriarch of our family. He has since passed away, but he was a surgeon. One day, like a bolt out of the blue, it dawned on me that I was really meant for medicine. My personality and skillset lent itself toward medicine. I was literally at a family reunion, looked at my uncle and thought 'I want to be like him.' I graduated from college with a degree in history then went to graduate school for two years to get my pre-med requirements. It was over the course of weeks or months that I had an epiphany.

### TT&C: What made you decide you wanted to pursue politics?

SD: It was almost as unexpected as going into medicine, frankly. With my old medical practice we had a certain number of weeks of vacation we had to take every year. I happened to be on one of those vacations when I got a call from our state society that the National Council of State Legislators was at Opryland, and they needed an anesthesiologist to go stand at the booth for the American Society of Anesthesiologist. I wasn't doing anything. I had a suit – the same suit and shoes I wore to my interviews for internships – so I put them on and went to Opryland.

I was standing at the booth, handing out brochures and the Tennessee Medical Association booth was next to ours. I struck up a conversation with the individual manning that booth – Julie Griffin – who was their lobbyist. We talked, and she asked if I was interested in running for office. I thought that was intriguing and three years later I was a state senator. I had never gone to a county party meeting, gone to a rotary club meeting, or spoken in public. Anesthesiologists operate with a great deal of anonymity. If we do our job right, most of our patients don't remember meeting us.

## TT&C: What first brought you to Tennessee? What do you enjoy most about living here?

**SD:** I finished my medical training, and got a good job offer in Nashville. I had gone to college for four years in Sewanee and graduated from the University of the South. I had really, really loved my time in Tennessee, so when I got a practice opportunity here I jumped on it. I have been here since 1996. Middle Tennessee



Dickerson participates in a medical mission event. Outside of the state legislature, Dickerson works as an anesthesiologist in the greater Nashville area.

"I think the government that governs closest to the people governs the best. There should be local issues that should be decided locally." — Sen. Steve Dickerson

is where I chose to live, and while I can't say anything bad about the other two grand divisions, for me I love Middle Tennessee's people and environment. I love the outdoors, the fact that we have lakes around us. We're close to the mountains and we're close to the beach. I love music; playing guitar is my hobby. For me, Nashville specifically is the perfect place to raise a family and practice medicine.

## TT&C: If someone from outside the area asked you to describe your district, what would you tell them?

SD: My district is suburban, but there is some variety in there also. Interestingly, in my district I represent public schools whose demographics have kids who are over 90 percent from challenging backgrounds. I also represent probably the wealthiest zip code in Tennessee. I get most of West Nashville, which is where a lot of the population comes from. That area is Green Hills, Belle Meade, Bellevue, West Meade area. I do have a wide array of constituents, which is an exciting thing. There is no cookie cutter constituent. My district, I am told, has the highest percentage of kids who attend private school of all 33 districts, but I also have public schools that are struggling. Trying to find a one-size-fitsall solution isn't possible in my district. You have to find where the greatest public good is with any question that gets posed.

## TT&C: What do you enjoy most about your district?

SD: It's challenging in that it's not homogeneous. If everyone were the same or they came from the same socioeconomic strata, went to the same schools and their kids all went to the same schools, it would simplify things. I don't know if there is any district across the state you can paint with that broad a brush. Geographically, my district is one of the smaller districts in terms of how compact it is. I can get from almost any point in the district from my house within 15 minutes. I know other senators who cover multiple counties and might have to drive 100 miles to get to one point in their district.

What's interesting in a lot of districts – having spoken to my rural colleagues on this – the state senators are the highest-ranking elected official. In Nashville, Jim Cooper is one of my constituents and he represents us in Congress. David Briley is in my district and he's Nashville's Mayor. I have five or six councilpersons in my district. I can go to the grocery store and virtually no one knows who I am – which is great. I have other colleagues from more rural districts who say they can't go out to dinner in a restaurant without having someone speaking to them.

## TT&C: You are the sponsor of Senate Bill 589, which works to clear a pathway to restoring voting rights for convicted felons that have served their sentence. Why do you think this issue is important?

**SD**: Under current law, hundreds of thousands of citizens in Tennessee—people who have successfully completed their sentences and are living, working, and paying taxes in their communities—are stymied from voting because of government interference.

Tennessee has the fourth highest disenfranchisement rate in the country. Currently, 320,000 Tennesseans, more than 8 percent of the state's total population, are disenfranchised by the onerous restoration process despite having already served their time and successfully completed their parole and/or probation.

Getting government out of the way to



Dickerson reads to local preschool students as part of the annual Read Across America Day festivities to mark the birthday of Dr. Seuss in April. One of Dickerson's major legislative proposals was for a smarter pre-k program and improvements to early education systems across Tennessee. One of Dickerson's most recent educational proposals has been to help those incarcerated in state prisons attain higher education to give them a better chance of success in adjusting back into society.



Dickerson plays at the annual Jammin' and Biscuits fundraiser at the Loveless Barn in Nashville. Dickerson first performed at the campaign fundraiser in 2013.

those currently re-entering society but it will also provide integrity and dignity to people who are still suffering consequences from mistakes made when they were young and for those who have turned their lives around and have become leaders in our communities. This bill is critical to taking government out of the process and creating a fair and just system."

restore the ability to vote will not only help

## TT&C: What is the function of the state and local government committee, which you chair?

SD: For the last seven years, I've been on a number of committees, and the one I enjoyed the most was the state and local government committee. I used to be vice chairman, but for the past few years I served on other committees. I was appointed by the lieutenant governor a few months ago to go serve as chair of the state and local government committee. It sounds simple – the state and local committee – but really what it does is take all the bills and subject matter that no one else wants and we get it.

It's pretty obvious what is education and goes to the education committee or what is health and goes to the health commitee. The state and local committee oversees elections, military components, all the prisons and criminal justice, and things like annexation, de-annexation, and all the liquor laws. It's really a grab bag of stuff.

#### TT&C: What is your leadership style?

SD: Some people are combative and some people are confrontational. I tend to be a consensus kind of guy. I like to use the analogy of a Venn diagram. You try to find that one area where everyone overlaps. A lot of the time you can't find that common interest or agreement. If that's the case, you figure out who you are going to irritate today — and I'm sorry about that.

My overall governing personal philosophy is to find a balance. I do have primary considerations. Constitutionality is a big issue, and I've got the will of my voters, which is obviously a huge issue. Then I strike a balance between what I think is right, what my voters think is right, and what the constitution will allow

TT&C: What is your take on preemption? **SD**: I don't like preemption. I'm actually the only Republican elected from Davidson County right now, and I'm the only Republican to ever serve as a state senator from Nashville. I'm one rare individual in that circumstance. As you may know from following the news, people outside Nashville like to pass a lot of laws that impact Nashville. My other colleagues – the 29 who do not represent Davidson County – have a habit of disproportionately passing bills that affect Davidson County and take away our local autonomy. My position for the past seven years has been to fight on behalf of Davidson County since I'm the only senator from Davidson County in the majority party.

I've sort of hurled myself into this debate as a pretty tireless advocate to prevent preemption. That's a local issue for me, but it actually has statewide implication. I think the government that governs closest to the people governs the best. There should be local issues that should be decided locally. There is a constitutional argument, frankly, that the state, since it charters all of the city governments, really does have the authority to tell us what to do. I think that frankly has been taken a little bit to an extreme, and I don't really support that. I'm sort of the person in the Senate who pushes back most vigorously for local autonomy.

### TT&C: What can municipal leaders do to help in the fight against preemption?

**SD:** What I would encourage the people who represent the cities and counties throughout our state to do is to realize that if someone else is getting preempted today, you might get preempted tomorrow. There is a really important principle here. If you see Nashville getting picked on or Memphis getting picked on or some particular county, go to your local legislators, because I assure you, they really do listen to what you say. Tell them you don't support preemption whether it's your local ordinance or a local ordinance in Nashville or Memphis. Go to them and tell them that preempting someone else's laws is objectionable to you. If you would work with me and work through your legislators, I think we can really move this issue forward.